Wed. May 6, 1970

Bill Everett statement

Abraham Lincoln in a time of crisis said, "If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could then better judge what to do, and how to do it." I don't really know politics. I should like to present myself as a nonpartisan or, if partisanship is necessary, as a partisan of justice.

Last night Steve Early made a call to demonstrate at the ROTC final review. I consider this an irresponsible action. Last year the call went out to disrupt the final review as well. Probably the most violent protesting came when a group of demonstrators threw dandelions on the senior cadets. However, Steve said that if Colonel Hefti could not be intimidated into calling off the review, it is doubtful that it would be permitted to reach its conclusion. This is clearly a case of one faction attempting to deny another its rights.

What is to be gained by disrupting the review? ROTC is not an impersonal monster; it is composed of people like myself. We are seeking only to fill our military obligation. Dr. Martin Luther King said, "If a man hasn't found something he is willing to die for, he isn't fit to live." I personally feel that this country has given me something that I am willing to fight for and, if necessary, to die for.

I suggest that it is the condition and benefits of freedom that are worth fighting for: first, freedom from the unlawful use of force, the unlawful denial of life, liberty and property; second, freedom to pursue happiness

in the form of a full cultivation of each person's moral and intellectual capacities. If this country secures this freedom, and I believe today's activities only confirm that it does, then we must be prepared to defend ourselves and our political system against attacks founded on anarchy as well as tyranny. And if, while might is necessary to secure right, and at the same time we want to avoid letting might define right, what better means could we employ than to join a liberal arts education with military training for officers?

There are certain conditions and policies in America which need change, radical change. Because we stand the best chance for constructive change within the existing system, I advocate political action. America is one of the few countries in the world which has provided from its very founding for change. Political change may be slow but it can be both positive, deliberate, and bloodless. And it seems to me that it was the blood of four young students which has activated the conscience of the nation.

It has been said many times in the last few days that President Nixon, by ignoring the popular will, has sold out the country. I offer a different interpretation of what has happened in the last several years. I submit that Americans have sold themselves out by abdicating political responsibility. A great deal of power has recently accrued to the executive branch of our government. The legislative power resides in Congress, whose members are the direct representatives of the people. They have the responsibility of defining national interest as well as

voicing the sentiments of their constituency. Nowhere in the Constitution is the legislature given the right to surrender its powers to the executive. Yet this happened time and again. The Gulf of Tonkin resolution was one of the high points of congressional responsibility. It is my man and your man, who are supposed to be representing our interests, who are passing the power of the purse and the power to declare war on to the President. It is time we stop looking at the manifestations of irresponsibility and start looking at the causes. Our government needs close scrutiny but do not let anyone tell you where to look or what to look for: this is the duty of the educated man.

One of the most disconcerting developments in the not-too-distant past has been the decline in personalness and individuality in our country. There has been a dramatic increase in ideological fervor. It is very rare to find a man who is willing to disassociate himself from any kind of movement, and stand alone on his own merits. Today is the era of the demagogue who says: "Now we have to rally as a group. Now we have to lose a few heads to win the cause." Those who take the law into their hands still demand all constitutional protections. Yet their very actions undermine our Constitution and our laws.

The ideologies have become a front for civil disobedience. Most men have a different group morality than that which they associate with themselves. Most individuals would not consider stoning a policeman just because he was present. Yet the group senses a threat to their exis-

tence and with an increase in numbers comes a decline in individual morality.

If I make no other point in this speech I would like at least to foster a new sense of individual responsibility. Not a responsibility to the Left or to the Right but a responsibility to ourselves and to justice.

There are many people on this campus who sympathize with some of the tenets of the national strike and yet not all of them. To these people and to everyone I would say this: be your own keeper. Do not be swayed by the rhetoric that says if you do not accept the whole platform you are doing nothing in reality to bring about peace. I appeal to everyone not to be directed by any force outside his own conscience. Any man who feels strongly about what our country should do, should be strong enough to deliberate and to decide for himself what is to be done. Do not let the great Leviathan change your morality or your principles.

Like many of you, I think, I'm confused. I see no easy solutions to the difficult problems that confront us. There is one basic principle however that I follow when contemplating change and how to achieve it: that is, if in the process of initiating change I violate the sovereignty and rights of another individual, I will have gained nothing. It will only constitute a change from being oppressed to being the oppressor.

Thank you.

###